

And the Word Became Flesh

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And the **WORD** Became Flesh

Lesson One: John 1:1-34

Hymn to the Logos

The first eighteen verses of John 1 are often called “the hymn to the Logos”. Logos is the Greek word that is translated “Word” in our English Bibles, and the poetic beauty of the text leads many Biblical scholars to conclude that it was used as an actual hymn in the worship of the early church.

Of the Greek words that appear in the New Testament, logos is one of the most difficult to translate, because there isn’t really a clear English equivalent to it. Logos doesn’t simply mean “word”, and this is evident even from the other places it appears in our language. For instance, our English word “biology” is a compound constructed from two Greek words, bio and logos. Bio means “life”, so this important natural science is the logos of life.

Vine comments that logos “denotes

the expression of thought, not the mere name of an object”, and we should remember this when we consider Jesus as the Word. In many ways, John 1 is a divine commentary meant to help us grasp this concept. Jesus has always co-existed with the Father, just as the expression of a thought is inseparable from the thought itself. He has the power to create and illuminate, just as an idea does.

Finally, Jesus is the Logos in the sense explored by John 1:14, 18. He is the ultimate translation of God into a form that we can understand—the form that He shared with us. To our mortal understanding, bound by our flesh and the creation in which we exist, God is incomprehensible. Once the Word became flesh, though, that was no longer true. Jesus is the perfect expression of what God would be if God were like us, and we can come to God through Him.

And the Word Became Flesh: Lesson One

1. Who does John 1:1 say was in the beginning? How else is He described? According to 1:2, who was with Him? In 1:3, what actions of His are recounted? What does this teach us about the nature of Christ?
2. According to 1:4, what does the Word possess within Himself? What is the effect of this? According to 1:5, what does the light do? What results from this? What does this mean?
3. Whom do we meet in 1:6? How is he described? According to 1:7, why did God send Him? What distinction does the text draw in 1:8? Why make this distinction?
4. How is Christ described in 1:9? What is He said to do? Into what is He coming? According to 1:10, what is His relationship to the world? How did the world react to Him? In 1:11, to whom else did He come? How did they react? What is this talking about?

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5. John 5

6. John 6

7. John 7

8. John 8

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9. What question do the messengers ask in 1:22? How does John reply in 1:23? What is the significance of this statement?

10. In 1:24, how are the questioners described? In 1:25, what do they want to know? In 1:26-27, how does John explain himself? How does this help us to understand the purpose of the baptism of John?

11. Whom does John see in 1:29? How does John describe Him? What else does he reveal about Him in 1:30? What does this mean? What does John reveal about why he came baptizing in 1:31? Does this encounter happen before or after the baptism of Jesus? Why?

12. What does John say about Jesus in 1:32? According to 1:33, did John understand the significance of this at first? Who explained it to John? What did He say? What else does John reveal in 1:34? Why is this important?

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Lesson Two: John 1:35-2:25

Cleansing the Temple

One of the most fascinating, and at the same time one of the most difficult attributes of the book of John is that it is not like what are often called the Synoptic Gospels. These gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, are called the Synoptic Gospels because they “see things the same”. The gospel of John is very different in this regard. Most of the gospel relates stories of Jesus that are not contained in the other gospels, and even the elements that are repeated are often quite different.

We encounter one such element in John 2, in the story of the cleansing of the temple. The Synoptic authors, even Luke with his stated intention of telling the story of Jesus “in consecutive order”, locate the cleansing of the temple during the last week of Jesus’ ministry. John, by contrast, relates this story near the beginning of his account of Je-

sus’ ministry. What’s going on here? Was John mistaken? Were the Synoptic authors misinformed? Did Jesus cleanse the temple twice?

As we consider this issue, we must be careful to allow John to speak for himself and not impose our requirements for narrative on him. Even though John is loosely chronological, the gospel is much more concerned with matters of evidence and theme. John does not feel compelled to adhere to strict narrative convention, any more than a modern-day preacher is concerned with only citing passages about Jesus in chronological order in a sermon. This is why he presents the story of the temple cleansing where he does. He means for us to view it as a miniature version of Jesus’ entire ministry. Just as Jesus overturned the moneychangers’ tables, so too he overturned hundreds of years of Pharisaical tradition. They were no longer important. Jesus was.

And the Word Became Flesh: Lesson Thirteen

Indicate the main concepts and themes for each context of Scripture listed below.

1. John 1:1-34
2. John 1:35-2:25
3. John 3
4. John 4

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Lesson Thirteen: Review

The Scorned Messiah

John's final commentary on Jesus' ministry appears in John 12:37-41. He observes that despite all the signs that Jesus performed, the Jewish nation did not believe, just as Isaiah had prophesied about them hundreds of years before. Ultimately, only a few accepted Jesus for what He clearly was.

The reasons for this failure were numerous. The Sanhedrin feared that Jesus would provoke a Roman crackdown that would cost them their position. Other Jewish leaders didn't want to endanger their place in society by proclaiming a Messiah whom the political elite opposed. The Pharisees refused to accept Him because He followed the word of God and rejected the traditions of the Jewish elders. Some of the common people were cowed by the opposition of their leaders. Others thought to use Jesus only for earth-

ly advantage. Still others were too proud to embrace His radical teaching. The result was nearly perfectly ironic. The Jews had been asking God to send them a Messiah for centuries, and yet, when the Messiah appeared, almost all of them turned their backs on Him.

Today, the message of Jesus is no less challenging for the people of our time. He demands that we be willing to give up the things we most prize on earth, to endure the scorn of others, to leave behind the religious dogmas that we hold most dear. He expects us to stand for the truth, alone if necessary, to serve the spirit rather than the flesh, and most of all, to acknowledge that we need a Savior. Just as was true 2000 years ago, most people aren't willing to do that. They may claim to love the Lord, but they don't want to follow Him. Do we?

1. What do we see John doing in John 1:35-36? In 1:37, what result does this have? In 1:38-39, what eventually happens because of this? How does this story differ from later stories about the ministry of Jesus?
2. According to 1:40, who was one of the two disciples? In 1:41, what does he do? In 1:42, what does Jesus say to the new arrival? What are we to make of the difference between this story and Matthew 16:16-18?
3. Does John 1 tell us who the second of the two disciples is? Who is he likely to be? Passages like Mark 1:16, 19 may help. Why is this significant?
4. What does Jesus do in John 1:43? What does Philip do in 1:45? What answer does he get in 1:46? How does Philip deal with this? What can we learn from Philip's response today?

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5. Whom does Jesus see in 1:47? What does he say about him? In 1:48, how does Nathanael answer Jesus? What does Jesus tell him? How does Nathanael respond to this in 1:49? Why would he react in this way? What should we take from this?

6. What does Jesus tell Nathanael in 1:50? In 1:51, what promise does He make? What is Jesus talking about?

7. What event is taking place in 2:1-2? Who is there? What happens in 2:3? In 2:4, how does Jesus reply to this? What does Mary do in 2:5? What does this show about Mary?

8. What objects are described in 2:6? What does Jesus have done with them in 2:7-8? What reaction does this generate in 2:9-10? What does this result in in 2:11? What can we take from this?

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9. According to 12:36-37, what is the result of all of Jesus' signs and words? How does 12:38-41 explain this? Why is this important?

10. According to 12:42, what did many of the authorities think of Jesus? What did they do about it? How does 12:43 explain this? Is this still a problem today? If so, when?

11. What does Jesus declare about Himself and God in 12:44? What does this mean? How does He further explain their relationship in 12:45? How does He describe His purpose in 12:46? What does this mean for us?

12. What comparison does Jesus make in 12:47-48? According to 12:49-50, why is this true? What does this teach us today about the importance of the words of Jesus?

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5. According to 12:16, how do the disciples see this event at first? What do they eventually figure out? What happens in 12:17-18? What do the Pharisees say about it in 12:19? What impression do these events leave? Why is this ironic?

6. What happens in 12:20-22? In 12:23, what does Jesus tell them? In 12:24-25, what does He follow this up with? What does He promise in 12:26? How do these various ideas connect with one another?

7. What does Jesus say in 12:27-28? In 12:28, what happens? According to 12:29, what effect does this have? What does Jesus say about it in 12:30? What does this teach us about the ability of the unbeliever to ignore evidence? Why is this important?

8. What does Jesus predict will happen in 12:31-32? According to 12:33, what is He talking about? In 12:34, what does the crowd ask? In 12:35-36, how does Jesus answer them? What doesn't the crowd understand here?

And the Word Became Flesh: Lesson Two

9. What is Jesus doing in 2:13? In 2:14, what does He see? What does He do about it in 2:15-16? In 2:17, with what do His disciples connect this? When does this event occur, chronologically speaking? What does it teach us?

10. What do the Jews ask in 2:18? In 2:19, how does Jesus answer them? How do the Jews reply in 2:20? What does this imply? According to 2:21, what do they not understand?

11. What event is described in 2:22? What does this tell us about the disciples' understanding of the work of Jesus during His ministry? Why is this important?

12. What happens in 2:23? In 2:24-25, how does Jesus react? What does this show about the difference between Jesus' attitude and the attitude of a false prophet?

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Lesson Three: John 3

Born of Water

There are many passages of Scripture that plainly teach the necessity of baptism for forgiveness of sins, and yet there are also many nominally Christian religious groups that deny that baptism is necessary. This doctrinal conflict often leads members of such groups to engage in some rather strained Scriptural interpretation in order to explain away the inconvenient passages.

This mindset is evident in the way that many address John 3:5, in which Jesus notes that “unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” For Christians, this text presents no difficulties. We are spiritually conceived by the operation of the Holy Spirit through the word, as described in 1 Peter 1:23-25, and we are reborn in the waters of baptism. Matters are more difficult for those who argue that baptism has noth-

ing to do with salvation. They are reduced to arguing that “born of water” refers to our fleshly birth, and “born of Spirit” refers to a second birth that takes place when we believe.

There are several problems with this interpretation. First, there is nothing about the phrase “born of water” that would lead an impartial reader to conclude that it referred to the earthly birth process. “Water” is never used with respect to that process anywhere else in Scripture. In fact, when John uses a “born of” phrase to describe fleshly birth in John 1:13, he says not “born of water” but “born of blood”.

Second, water is explicitly linked with baptism in numerous passages, just as baptism is frequently linked with salvation. The meaning is plain. Jesus wants us to understand that we are “born again” in baptism, saved from our sins.

1. According to John 12:1, when does the next story take place? Where does it take place? Why is this significant? What happens in 12:2? What does Mary do in 12:3? What do her actions symbolize?
2. Who speaks up in 12:4? In 12:5, what objection does he raise? How does 12:6 explain his motivation? In 12:7-8, how does Jesus answer him? How does this account compare to the account of Mark 14:3-9? What can we learn from all this?
3. What happens in John 12:9? What do the Jews do about this? Why? In 12:10-11, what result does this have? Why? What does this show us about the Jewish rulers?
4. What happens in 12:12? In 12:13, what result does this have? In 12:14, what does Jesus do? According to 12:15, why is this happening? What would the significance of this event have been to a first-century Jew?

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Lesson Twelve: John 12

The Triumphal Entry

If there is a high-water mark for the ministry of Jesus, it comes at the time of the triumphal entry. Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey, the traditional mount of the Davidic kings. The multitudes acclaim Him as King. Jesus' enemies survey the spectacle and despair of ever defeating their Nazarene foe.

In less than a week, though, Jesus will face a stunning reversal of fortune. He will be betrayed by one of His closest followers and arrested. The authorities will mock Him and hold Him up as a spectacle for public derision. The crowds that hailed Him as the Messiah will cry out for His crucifixion. Finally, He will die on the cross, a death reserved for the scum of the earth, robbers and rebellious slaves. In just a few short days, Jesus plunges from the pinnacle to the precipice, a fall made all the more dramatic by His own acts.

In earthly terms, this makes no sense. If I knew that I had to die for the sins of mankind, I would try to make the process as dignified as possible. I wouldn't set myself up to be humiliated as a failed king, a pretender to the Jewish throne. Why, then, did Jesus do that?

The most obvious answer is that the Scripture had to be fulfilled. The same prophecies that predicted Jesus' triumphal entry also predicted His public shaming at the hands of His enemies. However, God was in control of the prophecies, not vice versa. Why did God's plan set God's Son up for scorn?

The answer lies in what we needed. The atonement for our sin required Jesus not merely to die, but to be humiliated, so that He could bear the shame we earned. The triumphal entry was a necessary part of that shame, the elevation before the fall that Jesus took for us.

And the Word Became Flesh: Lesson Three

1. Whom do we meet in John 3:1? In 3:2, what does he do? Why does he do it this way? What does Jesus tell him in 3:3? Why does Jesus say this here?
2. What does Nicodemus ask in 3:4? How does Jesus answer him in 3:5-6? What does this answer mean? Why is this important?
3. What does Jesus tell Nicodemus not to do in 3:7? How does Jesus explain Himself in 3:8? What does this explanation mean?
4. What does Nicodemus ask in 3:9? What reply does Jesus make in 3:10? Was it fair for Jesus to expect Nicodemus to understand? If not, what point is Jesus making?

And the Word Became Flesh: Lesson Three

5. What contrasting source of knowledge does Jesus present in 3:11? How does Jesus say Nicodemus is reacting to this? What does Jesus mean by this? What is the point here for all of us?

6. What does Jesus ask in 3:12? What does He say in 3:13? Why is this relevant here? What does Jesus predict in 3:14? What is He referring to? How is this concept a “heavenly thing”?

7. What does Jesus reveal in 3:16? How does Jesus describe the purpose of His coming in 3:17? What two responses to Jesus are described in 3:18? What is the result of each one? What does this teach us about the importance of belief?

8. According to 3:19, what has happened? What result did this have? Why? What two kinds of people are presented in 3:20-21? What does each do? Why? How does understanding this help us live righteously today?

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9. What does Jesus do in 11:41-42? What does He say? What does He do in 11:43? In 11:44, what result does this have? What would it have been like to have been an eyewitness to this miracle?

10. What two reactions to the miracle appear in 11:45-46? What do the chief priests and Pharisees do about it in 11:47? What do they say in 11:47-48? What do their words reveal about their hearts?

11. In 11:49, who is speaking? What is his position? In 11:49-50, what does he say? According to 11:51-52, why does he say this? What does this result in in 11:53? What does this teach us about whether a man must be right with God to use a spiritual gift?

12. What does Jesus do in 11:54? What situation is described in 11:55? What different attitudes toward Jesus appear in 11:56-57? What does this teach us about the situation toward the end of Jesus’ life?

And the Word Became Flesh: Lesson Eleven

5. What does Jesus say to Martha in 11:23? In 11:24, how does she respond to this? What does Jesus declare in 11:25-26? What answer does Martha give in 11:27? How do Jesus' words apply to that specific situation? How do they apply to us?

6. What does Martha do in 11:28? What does Mary do about this in 11:29? Why does she come now and not earlier? In 11:30, where is Jesus? What happens in 11:31? Why is this important?

7. What does Mary do in 11:32? In 11:33-35, what does Jesus do in response to the scene? What different reactions do His actions generate in 11:36-37? How do we square Jesus' actions here with His words in 11:4?

8. What does Jesus do in 11:38-39? What objection does Martha raise? What does Jesus ask her in 11:40? What does Jesus want to accomplish with His words here? What can we learn from them?

And the Word Became Flesh: Lesson Three

9. Where do Jesus and His disciples go in 3:22? What do they do there? In 3:23, what is John doing? Why? What does this tell us about the nature of Bible baptism?

10. What happens in 3:25? What do the disputants do in 3:26? How does John respond to their concerns in 3:27-30? What is his attitude here? When is it important for us to have the same attitude?

11. What comparison does John make in 3:31? In 3:32, what situation does John describe? In 3:33-34, what does he say the one who receives testimony does? Why? What does all this mean?

12. According to 3:35, what is the Father's attitude toward the Son? What has the Father done in consequence? What comparison does John make in 3:36? What does this teach us about the connection between belief and obedience?

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Lesson Four: John 4

White for Harvest

Although Jesus often calls us to transform our actions, some of His most profound challenges to us call us to transform our attitudes and our thoughts. We frequently fail to realize how differently God sees the world than we do, and Jesus seeks to turn or return our perspective to where it should be.

We see Jesus performing this service for His disciples in John 4:30-38. This exchange begins as a large number of Samaritans have been persuaded by the woman at the well to seek out Jesus, and they are coming across the fields toward Him. Jesus begins with an observation to his disciples that anyone from that agriculturally centered day would have agreed with—that the fields were still four months away from the time when they could be harvested. However, He continues on to tell them that the

fields were actually already white for harvest. His point wasn't that the literal ears of grain in the fields were ready for the sickle. It was that the Samaritans who were coming to hear Him were ready to be harvested for the kingdom of God. The disciples who looked at the scene and thought about agriculture rather than souls were thinking about the wrong thing.

In our lives, we spend too much time thinking about the modern-day equivalent of agriculture. We go to work to work, we speak to our neighbors to be friendly, we visit with our children's friends' parents to make sure they're not shady, and so on. There's nothing wrong with any of those things, but they're not the reason why we're here. To us, every interaction should be an opportunity first to spread the gospel and second to fulfill some earthly purpose. Then our fields will be white for harvest too.

1. According to John 11:1, who is ill? How is his family situation described in 11:1-2? In 11:3, what does his family do? What does Jesus say about the situation in 11:4? What is strange about His response?
2. According to 11:5, what is Jesus' attitude toward this family? In 11:6-7, what plans does He set up? Why would Jesus do this? What concern do His disciples express in 11:8? What reply does Jesus give in 11:9-10? What does He want the disciples to understand?
3. What does Jesus announce in 11:11? What do His disciples say in 11:12-13? Why? What does Jesus reveal in 11:14-15? How do the disciples react to this in 11:16? What does this teach us about the mindset of Jesus and the apostles?
4. What situation does Jesus find in 11:17-19? What do the sisters do in 11:20? What does Martha say to Jesus in 11:21-22? What does this reveal about her?

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Lesson Eleven: John 11

The Chief Priests

John 11 describes one of the most amazing miracles of Jesus' career. He comes to the tomb of Lazarus, a man who has been dead for four days, whom everyone knows has been dead for four days, commands him to come out, and he does. If we wish, we can explain away the healings of Jesus by observing that sick people sometimes get better on their own. Dead people, on the other hand, never get better on their own. The resurrection of Lazarus, then, reveals the hand of God.

In the face of such overpowering evidence, we might think that the reaction of the Jewish nation to Jesus would be very straightforward. He claims to be the Son of God and backs up His claim by raising a man from the dead, so you believe Him and follow Him, right? In reality, the religious elite of Jesus' day, those who were theoretically the

most devoted to God, react to this miracle by deciding to kill Jesus.

This bizarre conclusion only makes sense when we consider the source. The Jewish leaders were concerned with one thing only—preserving their own power and prestige. Jesus, whether He was an impostor claiming to be the Messiah or really was the Messiah, was a threat to that. In fact, the resurrection of Lazarus made Him a threat they had to get rid of, precisely because the miracle was so indisputable. The validity of Jesus' claim didn't enter into their calculus.

We see the same reaction today from people who care more about other things than serving God. They have the capacity to ignore the plain teachings of Scripture because those teachings don't match what they want to do. Jesus faced this same problem. Why should His servants expect anything different?

And the Word Became Flesh: Lesson Four

1. What does Jesus do in John 4:1? Why? What do we learn about His baptism practices from 4:2? Why is this important? According to 4:3-6, where does Jesus end up?
2. In 4:7, who shows up? What does Jesus ask her for? What response does He get in 4:9? Why? In 4:10, how does Jesus answer her? What's going on here? What do Jesus' actions teach us?
3. What does the woman point out in 4:11? In 4:11-12, what does she want to know? What comparison does Jesus make in 4:13-14? How does He explain His conclusion? What is He talking about?
4. In 4:15, what does the woman ask for? Does she have any idea what's going on? How does Jesus reply to her in 4:16? What does she say in 4:17? In 4:17-18, what does Jesus say about this? How are His words a response to her request?

And the Word Became Flesh: Lesson Four

5. What does the woman say to Jesus in 4:19? What problem does she present to Him in 4:20? What does Jesus reveal in 4:21? How does He settle the dispute in 4:22? What can we learn from Jesus here?

6. What does Jesus say is happening in 4:23? Why? How does He explain the reasons for this worship practice in 4:24? How does the woman reply to this in 4:25? What does Jesus say to her in 4:26? Why is this discussion important?

7. What happens in 4:27? How do they react to the scene before them? What does the woman do in 4:28-29? In 4:30, what result does this have? How does this illustrate an important attribute of the gospel?

8. What do the disciples want in 4:31? In 4:32, how does Jesus answer them? In 4:33, how do the disciples react to this? How does Jesus explain Himself in 4:34? How can we make His attitude our own?

And the Word Became Flesh: Lesson Ten

9. What does Jesus promise about the sheep in 10:28? According to 10:29, why is this possible? What does Jesus reveal about Himself in 10:30? Does this text mean that a Christian can never fall away? Why or why not?

10. What do the Jews do in 10:31? What does Jesus ask in 10:32? What do they tell Him in 10:33? How does Jesus rebut this accusation in 10:34-36? What problem does this exchange reveal in the Jews? How can we avoid this problem in our own lives?

11. What test does Jesus propose in 10:37? What does He say they should do instead in 10:38? What result does this have in 10:39? When should we apply this test today?

12. Where does Jesus go in 10:40? According to 10:41, what happens there? What do the people say? According to 10:42, what result does this have? How are these people different from the Jerusalem Jews?

And the Word Became Flesh: Lesson Ten

5. What does Jesus say about knowledge in 10:14-15? What does He reveal in 10:16? What does this refer to? What does this show about the plans of Jesus? Why is this important?

6. How does Jesus describe the Father's attitude toward Him in 10:17? Why does the Father have this attitude? What does Jesus reveal about this in 10:18? What can we learn from this?

7. According to 10:19, what result do the words of Jesus have? What two competing views are expressed in 10:20-21? What is each view based on? What can we learn from this about our own opinions?

8. What setting is described in 10:22-23? What do the Jews do in 10:24? What do they ask? What does Jesus answer in 10:25? What does He say the Jews' problem is in 10:26-27? When do we see similar problems today?

And the Word Became Flesh: Lesson Four

9. What comment does Jesus cite in 4:35? What does He say is true instead? What is He talking about? What does He reveal about evangelism in 4:36-38? What does this teach us about our own evangelistic efforts?

10. What happens in 4:39? In 4:40-41, what further result does this have? In 4:42, what do the Samaritans say about this? What does this teach us about an important part of the evangelistic process?

11. Where is Jesus in 4:46? Whom does He meet? According to 4:47, what does the man want? What does Jesus say to Him in 4:48? How does the man reply in 4:49? What does Jesus say in 4:50? How does the man take this? Why does Jesus go through this whole conversation?

12. Whom does the man meet in 4:51? What does this new character say? What does the man learn in 4:52? In 4:53, what result does this have? What's the difference between the man's attitude in 4:50 and his attitude in 4:53?

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Lesson Five: John 5

Witnesses for Jesus

The mission statement for the entire gospel of John appears in John 20:31, where John states, “These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.” The gospel has many other things to offer us—poetic language, theological depth, and a unique portrait of our Lord, to name a few—but we must never forget that John’s first goal is to prove that Jesus is the Christ.

John approaches this goal from a perspective that is almost legal. Rhetorically speaking, he invites the reader to become a judge in a courtroom and then presents his evidence like a prosecuting attorney seeking a conviction, except that John seeks to establish the conviction of faith. The centerpiece of John’s legal strategy appears in Deuteronomy 19:15 which decrees that a charge against a man can

only be proven by the testimony of two or three witnesses. From beginning to end, John is preoccupied with presenting witnesses to the reader who will testify to the divinity of Jesus.

Some of these witnesses are human. John the Baptist appears as the first such witness. By the end of the gospel, he is joined by men such as the apostle Thomas and the narrator himself. Other witnesses, however, are supernatural in character. In John 5, Jesus appeals to the witness of the miracles that He has worked, the voice of the Father who acknowledged Him from heaven, and the testimony of the Scripture that foretold Him.

Together, this array of testimony makes a powerful case for Christ, one that is sufficient to inspire our faith despite the intervening centuries. When the witnesses proclaim Jesus, how can we doubt?

And the Word Became Flesh: Lesson Ten

1. What action does Jesus describe in John 10:1? What does it make the man doing it? What different action does He describe in 10:2? What does that action make the man doing it? What point is Jesus making here?
2. What interaction between shepherd and sheep does Jesus depict in 10:3-4? What different individual appears in 10:5? According to 10:6, what reaction does this man get from the sheep? Why? How should we understand this?
3. What does Jesus say of Himself in 10:7? What is He talking about? What does He reveal in 10:8? What does He promise in 10:9? What distinction does He draw in 10:10? What should we learn from this?
4. How does Jesus define Himself in 10:11? What does He say this means? What different character emerges in 10:12-14? What does he do? Why? What real-world people is Jesus referring to here? How should this understanding change our behavior?

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Lesson Ten: John 10

Sheep and Calvinism

Among other things, the false theology of Calvinism teaches the doctrine of perseverance of the saints, or "once saved, always saved". It states that no one who comes to the Lord can fall from grace and become lost again. Because of this teaching, many wicked people comfort themselves with the thought that they will go to heaven even if they don't repent, all because they were "saved" once. The false teaching blinds them to their lost condition and encourages them to live so as to remain lost forever.

One passage that Calvinists like to use to justify this deadly doctrine is John 10:28, in which Jesus says of His sheep, "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and none will snatch them out of My hand." They reason that because Jesus can never be defeated, none of His sheep can ever go astray.

The problem with this argument is that when we sin or fall away, Jesus isn't the spiritual weak link. We are. The devil doesn't try to go toe to toe with the King of kings. That would be pointless. Instead, he tries to get us to abandon Jesus so that He is no longer part of the conflict. It is true that none can snatch us out of Jesus' hand. When we entrust our souls to His protection, we need fear nothing. However, when we wander from the fold, the devil doesn't have to snatch us from His hand to devour us. We chose to abandon His defenses ourselves.

We are far better off, then, founding our hope not on some fanciful doctrine of indestructibility, but on what God has promised to those who obey in faith. As Jesus Himself says in Matthew 7:21, "Not everyone who says to me 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."

And the Word Became Flesh: Lesson Five

1. In John 5:1, where does Jesus go? What situation is described in 5:2-4? What does this show us about the supernatural in the time of Christ?
2. Whom does Jesus meet in 5:5-6? What does He say to him? How does the man explain himself in 5:7? In 5:8, what does Jesus do? According to 5:9, what result does this have? What does this teach us about Jesus?
3. In 5:10, what do the Jews ask the man? In 5:11, what answer does he give them? According to 5:12, what do the Jews want to know next? In 5:13, what problem do they run into? How realistic does this chaotic account seem? Why is this important?
4. What does Jesus do in 5:14? What does He say to the man? In 5:15, how does the man respond? In 5:16, how do the Jews take this? How does Jesus answer His critics in 5:17? According to 5:18, what further effect does this have? Why? What does it teach us about Jesus' claims for Himself?

And the Word Became Flesh: Lesson Five

5. In 5:19, what does Jesus say He does not do? Instead, what motivates Him? What does He predict will happen in 5:20-21? Why is this important?

6. What does Jesus say the Father has done in 5:22? What implications of this does Jesus spell out in 5:23? What promise does Jesus make in 5:24? How important does this make Jesus? Why do we care?

7. In 5:25, what does Jesus declare? In 5:26-27, how does He explain this shocking statement? What is Jesus talking about here? Why are His words significant?

8. What does Jesus predict will happen in 5:28? What two resurrections does He describe in 5:29? Who is assigned to each? How does Jesus describe His own powers to do this in 5:30? What does He do instead? Why? What does this teach us about the relationship between Jesus and the Father?

And the Word Became Flesh: Lesson Nine

9. How do the Pharisees respond to the formerly blind man in 9:28-29? How does the blind man answer them in 9:30? What can we make of this exchange?

10. What argument does the blind man lay out in 9:31-33? How logical is this argument? Why? How do the Pharisees answer it in 9:34? What do they do? What does this mean? What does this tell us about the Pharisees' hearts?

11. What does Jesus hear in 9:35? What does He do? What does the man ask in 9:36? How does Jesus reply to Him in 9:37? In 9:38, what result does this have? What does this teach us about who will listen to Jesus?

12. What does Jesus proclaim in 9:39? How do the Pharisees answer Him in 9:40? What does Jesus tell them in 9:41? What does His answer mean? What does it teach us about spiritual blindness?

And the Word Became Flesh: Lesson Nine

5. What question do the Pharisees ask in 9:15? What answer do they get? What do they argue about in 9:16? What do they ask of the man in 9:17? What does the man say? What should we learn from this?

6. According to 9:18, do the Pharisees believe this explanation? In 9:18-19, what do they do about it? In 9:20-21, how do the parents answer? How does 9:22 explain their answer? Can we encounter similar obstacles today? If so, where?

7. What do the Pharisees do in 9:24? What do they say? What answer to this does the formerly blind man give in 9:25? What does this tell us about him?

8. What do the Pharisees ask in 9:26? How does the blind man reply in 9:27? Why would he answer this way? What's really going on here?

And the Word Became Flesh: Lesson Five

9. What statement does Jesus make in 5:31? Why does He say such a thing? Deuteronomy 19:15 may help you answer. What witness does Jesus cite in John 5:32-35? Why does Jesus bring him up here?

10. What additional testimony does Jesus cite in 5:36? How does this non-human entity serve as a "witness"? What third witness appears in 5:37-38? What connection do the Jews have with Him? What does this lead them to do? What event is Jesus probably talking about here?

11. What final witness does Jesus cite in 5:39-40? How do the Jews deal with this witness? According to Jesus in 5:41-44, what underlying problem causes this symptom? How can we avoid this problem in us?

12. According to Jesus in 5:45, who won't accuse the Jews? Who will? What will be ironic about this accusation? What basic problem does Jesus identify in 5:46-47? Where do we see this problem emerge today?

And the **WORD**
Became Flesh

Lesson Six: John 6

Bread from Heaven

John 6 is an illustration of something that we don't often consider today—the drawbacks of miracles. In the beginning of the chapter, Jesus works the amazing feat of feeding 5000 men (not to speak of women and children) with food originally intended to feed a single peasant boy. This miracle certainly brought in the crowds, yes, but the crowds consisted of people who wanted not to follow Jesus, but to get another free meal.

In the ensuing conversation, Jesus attempts to persuade the crowd to have minds fixed on the things of the spirit, not the things of the flesh. He tells them that even miraculous manna from heaven was not enough to profit their wicked forebears, who died in the wilderness because of their sins. Instead, they should seek the true bread from heaven, Jesus, who could give

them eternal life. However, the crowd isn't interested in this spiritual feast. They want a real, tangible free lunch, and when Jesus begins to speak of (metaphorically) eating His flesh and drinking His blood, they lose interest and wander off. Despite His mighty work, Jesus is left alone with no one but the Twelve.

Today, without even the encouragement of miraculous loaves and fishes, millions seek Jesus for material benefit. Despite the warning of Scripture to the contrary, they believe that godliness is a means of earthly gain, and they look to Jesus to make them rich. Such foolishness cannot profit the true disciple. Jesus is the source of incomparable spiritual riches, but if we look to Him to give us wealth here, we're missing the entire point of His gospel. God sends rain on the just and the unjust, but only to the righteous does He grant eternal life.

1. Whom does Jesus encounter in John 9:1? What do the disciples ask Jesus in 9:2? How does Jesus correct their misapprehension in 9:3-4? What does Jesus state in 9:5? What does this have to do with healing a blind man?
2. What does Jesus do in 9:6? What does He command in 9:7? What result does this have? Why is this significant?
3. What discussion do the neighbors of the formerly blind man begin in 9:8-9? What does the man insist? What do they want to know in 9:10? How does the man explain what happened in 9:11-12?
4. What do the neighbors do with the man in 9:13? What fact is mentioned in 9:14? Why is this significant?

And the **WORD** Became Flesh

Lesson Nine: John 9

The Man Born Blind

Even though the phrase “political correctness” only entered our lexicon in the 1990s, the concept is as old as time. Every society has had its unwelcome truths that were not to be discussed, and in Palestine 2000 years ago, the divinity of Jesus was one of those unwelcome truths. There are many places in Scripture where this is apparent, but nowhere more so than in the story of the man blind from birth.

Everyone who lived in Jerusalem knew what the politically correct thing to say about Jesus was. Never mind that He did amazing works, never mind that He taught with the authority of God Himself, He healed men on the Sabbath, so clearly He must be a sinner at best or in league with the devil at worst. This was obvious nonsense, but anyone who dared to point that out ran the risk of criticism from the Jewish au-

thorities, or even of being put out of the synagogue, treated like an unrepentant sinner for no greater crime than confessing Jesus as the Christ He clearly was.

This Pharisaical thought control had a notable chilling effect. The people of Jerusalem talked about Jesus in murmurs, but none dared speak of Him openly except to condemn Him. When Jesus healed the man born blind, his parents, who knew perfectly well that he had been miraculously healed, allowed fear to close their mouths. Only the recipient of the miracle himself dared to speak the truth. He was rejected by his community for his honesty, but he was accepted by Jesus.

If we wish to please Jesus today, we dare not be intimidated by political correctness. Like the man born blind, it is our responsibility to tell the truth we know despite the consequences. It's what God expects.

And the Word Became Flesh: Lesson Six

1. Describe the situation in John 6:1-8. In 6:10-11, how does Jesus respond to it? According to 6:12-15, what different results did this produce? What does this teach us today?
2. In 6:16-18, what are the disciples doing? In 6:19, whom do they encounter? How do they react? What does Jesus say to them in 6:20? How do they react in 6:21? Why do you think Jesus did all this?
3. In 6:22, what does the crowd notice? What do they do about it in 6:23-25? What does this teach us about what the ministry of Jesus was like?
4. How does Jesus describe the crowd's motives in 6:26? In 6:27, what does He urge its members to do? What do they ask Him in 6:28? In 6:29, how does He answer them? What can we learn from this about the nature of faith?

And the Word Became Flesh: Lesson Eight

5. In 8:21, what does Jesus tell His audience? What do the Jews ask Him in 8:22? How does He compare Himself to them in 8:23? According to 8:24, what choice must they make? What are the consequences of that choice? How can we seek a spiritual, not a fleshly, mindset?

6. What do the Jews ask in 8:25? What answer do they get in 8:25-26? According to 8:27, what is the basic problem here? What does Jesus teach them in 8:28-29? In 8:30, what result does this have? What does this tell us about the level of understanding of Jesus' audience?

7. What does Jesus tell those who had believed in Him in 8:31-32? In 8:33, how do they reply? How does Jesus rebut their words in 8:34-36? How does He explain their lack of receptiveness in 8:37-38? What does this exchange teach us about the Jews of Jesus' day?

8. What do the Jews claim in 8:39? How does Jesus rebut this claim in 8:39-41? What new claim do the Jews make in 8:41? What slur is implied by their words here? How does Jesus show the problem with their new claim in 8:42-43? What does this tell us about the nature of spiritual relationships?

And the Word Became Flesh: Lesson Six

9. What dispute arises among the Jews in 6:52? What answer does Jesus give them in 6:53-55? What does this refer to? Why?

10. In 6:56, what does Jesus promise? What does this mean? How does He further explain Himself in 6:57? In 6:58, what comparison does He repeat? Why would Jesus explain Himself in this way?

11. In 6:60, what reaction do Jesus' words generate? What does Jesus ask in 6:61-62? Have we seen anything like this before in John? If so, where? What does He say in 6:63? What problem does He point out in 6:64? What statement does He make in 6:65? What does Jesus want us to understand from all this?

12. What result does this discussion have in 6:66? What does Jesus ask in 6:67? How does Simon Peter answer Him in 6:68-69? How does Jesus respond in 6:70-71? What does Jesus' attitude seem to be here?

And the **WORD** Became Flesh

Lesson Seven: John 7

Like This Man Speaks

Isaiah 53:2 prophesies of Jesus, “He had no form or majesty that we should look at Him, and no beauty that we should desire Him.” From this, we often conclude that Jesus wasn’t much to look at—which is true—but also that He didn’t have much presence—which is absolutely not true. Jesus wouldn’t have physically stood out in a crowd of His countrymen, but once He opened His mouth, His uniqueness became apparent. Jesus was the greatest public speaker of human history, and the power with which He spoke amazed even His enemies.

We see no better illustration of this than in the last part of John 7. Here, Jesus has been using the Feast of Booths as an opportunity to preach to the crowds assembled in Jerusalem for the festival. Naturally, the rulers of the Jews didn’t want this rabble-rouser claiming to

be the Christ and threatening to steal their position, so they sent some of the temple guard to arrest Him. However, as the officers begin to elbow their way through the crowd to lay hands on Jesus, they start listening to Him. When Jesus is finished, they return to their masters without the Teacher in custody. Naturally, the chief priests demand an explanation. The officers can only reply (probably while looking down and fidgeting), “No one ever spoke like this Man.” In other words, Jesus was such a dynamic speaker that He won the hearts of the very men sent to arrest Him!

If we wish to grow, we must come to appreciate not just what Jesus was, but who He was, and His supernatural wisdom was a big part of His nature. God’s word reveals a Man who was smarter than any mere human could ever be, a man of such brilliance and authority that He could only be the Son of God.

And the Word Became Flesh: Lesson Eight

1. Where is Jesus in John 8:2? What happens in 8:3? What do they ask Him in 8:4-5? According to 8:6, what is their motive? What kind of trap could they be laying here?
2. In 8:7, how does Jesus answer them? In 8:9, what effect does this have? What exchange occurs in 8:10-11? What can we learn from all this?
3. What does Jesus declare in 8:12? In 8:13, what objection do the Pharisees raise to this? How does Jesus defend Himself in 8:14-18? What passage from the Law is He referring to? Have we seen this before? Why is this important?
4. What do the Jews ask in 8:19? What are they probably implying? How does Jesus answer them? According to 8:20, where is this happening? What is not happening? Why not?

And the **WORD** Became Flesh

Lesson Eight: John 8

The Truth that Frees

The inscription over the doorway to the main building of the University of Texas is taken from John 8:32. It reads, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." I always found this an ironic statement, coming from a university as secular as the University of Texas, in the midst of a city as godless as the city of Austin. What, precisely, did they think truth was, and how did they think it made them free?

Jesus gives the declaration of John 8:32 some critical context a verse earlier, when He says, "If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples." Truth and freedom are not the inalienable birthright of all mankind. Instead, it is only the steadfast followers of Jesus who can expect to know the truth of the word of Christ and to be freed from their sins.

This promise is much less appealing to most of mankind than airy generalizations about truth and freedom. For one thing, it requires us both to accept our own ignorance apart from Jesus and to acknowledge our own slavery in the kingdom of darkness. These are two very humbling admissions to make, and the Jews of Jesus' initial audience refused to make them. They insisted that they were children of Abraham, and that despite Egyptian slavery, Babylonian captivity, and Roman subjugation, they had never been the slaves of anyone.

This deadly attitude is still alive and well today. It appears both in the denominational believer who rejects God's plan of salvation and in the self-described "good man" who doesn't think he needs God at all. Such people will never become part of the kingdom. Only the admitted sinner who hungers for the teaching

And the Word Became Flesh: Lesson Seven

1. In John 7:1, where is Jesus? According to 7:2, what time of year is it? What do His brothers tell Him to do in 7:3-4? According to 7:5, what was their motive? What does this tell us about the difficulties of the ministry of Jesus?
2. In 7:6, what does Jesus say to His brothers? How does He explain the difference between them and Him in 7:7? What does He say He is going to do in 7:8? Why? In 7:9, what is the final outcome? How does this help us understand Jesus better?
3. What does Jesus do in 7:10? According to 7:11, what do the Jews want to know? What difference of opinion emerges in 7:12? According to 7:13, how was this discussion carried out? What can we learn from this about the setting in which Jesus preached?
4. What does Jesus do in 7:14? In 7:15, how do the Jews react to this? How does Jesus explain Himself in 7:16? What group does He bring up in 7:17? What does this group know? What distinction does Jesus draw in 7:18? Can we still apply His words here today? If so, how?

And the Word Became Flesh: Lesson Seven

5. What provocative statement does Jesus make in 7:19? In 7:20, what answer does He get? What logical point does Jesus make in 7:21-23? In 7:24, with what does He conclude? How can we practice this today?

6. What do some of the people of Jerusalem ask in 7:25? What do they speculate about in 7:26? What counter-argument do they advance in 7:27? What does this show about the attitudes of others toward Jesus?

7. What does Jesus declare of Himself in 7:28-29? What is He talking about? What various reactions does this generate in 7:30-31? What does this tell us about the polarizing nature of Jesus' teaching? Why was it so polarizing?

8. What do the chief priests and Pharisees do in 7:32? What does Jesus say in response in 7:33-34? In 7:35-36, do the Jews have a clue what Jesus is talking about? What do they think He might be saying? What is he really talking about?

And the Word Became Flesh: Lesson Seven

9. What does Jesus promise in 7:37-38? According to 7:39, What is He talking about? When is this going to happen? What does this mean for us today?

10. What three opinions do different Jews express in 7:40-41? According to 7:42, how does the third opinion justify itself? In 7:43-44, what effect does this have on the crowds? What impression does this leave us with of the teaching of Jesus?

11. In 7:45, who shows up? What do the chief priests and Pharisees ask them? What answer do they give in 7:46? What counter-argument do the Pharisees make in 7:47-49? What does this teach us about them?

12. Who reappears in 7:50? In 7:51, what does he ask? Is this a valid question? What response does he get in 7:52? What does this exchange show about him?